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Message Text

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14
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

DPW-01 IO-12 EUR-25 AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /141 W
---------- 052413
R 140426 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1612
INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8433

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS
SUBJECT: WEEKLY SITREP MAY 6-12, 1973

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FRON CAN THO 12 MAY 73 REPEATED
TO YOUR FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAN THO 0309

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OPS, PINT, MARRECCA, ID, HU, PL, VS

SUBDACT: I WEEKLY SITREP MAY 6-12, 1973

1. SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MR IV SIMMERED DURING THE WEEK. A PHNOM PENH BOUND RELIEF CONVOY SAFELY CLEARED THE VIETNAMESE FRONTIER ON MAY 6. A BATTERED FANK BRIGADE BRIEFLY FOUND SHELTER IN VIETNAMESE TERRITORY. TWO ICCS VEHICLES RECEIVED HOSTILE FIRE IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS. MR IV COMMANDER MGEN NGHI EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER THE UNFAVORABLE RATIO BETWEEN GVN AND COMMUNIST CASUALTIES. THE GVN AGAIN FAILED TO COLLECT VC- HELD CIVILIAN DETAINEES IN THE U MINH FOREST. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A) MR IV MILITARY ACTIVITY SIMMERED THROUGHOUT THE WEEK. THE NUMBER OF REPORTED ENEMY- INITIATED
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INCIDENTS RANGED FROM A HIGH OF 58 ON MAY 8 TO A LOW OF 39 ON MAY 7 AND 11. THE CAMBODIAN BORDER WAS QUIET, BUT CHUONG THIEN ONCE AGAIN SAW HEAVY ACTION, ESPECIALLY IN THE FORM OF HARASSMENTS AND FLTACKS BY FIRE. RELATIVELY FEW GROUND ATTACKS-- JUST OVER TWENTY-- OCCURRED DURING THE WEEK, BUT ONE OF NOTE TOOK PLACE ON MAY 7 IN CHUONG THIEN. THE VC ATTACKED A PF OUTPOST AND WERE REPULSED AFTER HEAVY FIGHTING. GVN ARTILLERY ACCOUNTED FOR MOST OF THE ENEMY' S 20 DEAD.
THE VC, AWARE OF THE RESTRICTIONS PLACED UPON THE GVN' S USE OF ARTILLERY DURING THE CEASEFIRE, APPARENTLY WERE SURPRISED BY THE BARRAGE. EARLIER, WE REPORTED THAT SUCH RESTRICTIONS UPON ARTILLERY AND AIR SUPPORT CONTRIBUTED TO THE INCREASINGLY UNFAVORABLE RATIO OF GOVERNMENT TO COMMUNIST CASUALTIES. (CAN THO A-65).
(B) TEN VESSELS OF A MEKONG CONVOY BOUND FOR PHNOM PENH CROSSED THE BORDER WITHOUT DIFFICULTY ON THE MORNING OF MAY 6. THE SHIPS CARRIED FUEL, RICE, AMMUNITION, AND SUPPLIES. COMMUNIST GUNNERS FIRED ON THE SHIPS IN CAMBODIAN WATERS, SINKING ONE, BEFORE THE CONVOY REACHED SAFETY IN THE KHMER CAPITAL. FUTURE CONVOYS MAY BE SUBJECTED TO INCREASED HARASS-MENT WITHIN CAMBODIA. ARVN INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES THAT THE NVA HAS WITHDRAWN AT LEAST TWO BATTALIONS OF THE E-2 REGIMENT FROM THE BORDER AND POSITIONED THEM ALONG THE MEKONG, WELL WITHIN CAMBODIAN TERRITORY. THEIR MISSION IS TO ATTACK THE RELIEF CONVOYS. (CAN THO 0306).
(C) THE 15 TH FANK BRIGADE SOUGHT SANCTUARY ON VIETNAMESE SOIL ON MAY 8 AFTER KHMER INSURGENTS DROVE THE DEMORALIZED CAMBODIAN UNIT FROM PHNOM DEN MOUNTAIN. THE 15 TH' S COMMANDER, COL CHAU HAI SIEN, HAD BEEN WOUNDED AND EVACUATED ON MAY 3, AND WITH HIM HAD GONE HIS UNIT' S WILL TO FIGHT. REGION IV COMMANDER, MGEN NGHI, WHO EARLIER HAD DENIED THE CAMBODIANS PERMISSION TO CROSS THE BORDER AND HAD TOLD THEM TO STAND AND FIGHT, RELENTED AND PERMITTED THE FANK BRIGADE TO REGROUP JUST ON THE VIETNAMESE SIDE OF THE FRONTIER NEAR TINH BIEN. THE BRIGADE ARRIVED DESPERATELY SHORT OF AMMUNITION, REDUCED TO 700 MEN, AND UNDER THE COMMAND OF A SECOND LIEUTENANT. THE FANK UNIT PUSILLANIMOUSLY RECROSSED THE BORDER ON MAY 10 WITH A NEW COMMANDER, BUT STILL SHORT OF FOOD, FUEL, AND FIGHTING SPIRIT.

3. ICCS: TWO ATTACKS UPON ICCS VEHICLES LAST WEEK UNDERLINED THE PARLOUS SITUATION OF COMMISSION PERSONNEL IN VIETNAM . ON

MAY 6, A CLEARLY MARKED ICCS HELICOPTER CARRYING SEVEN COMMISSION PERSONNEL AND THREE CREW MEMBERS, RECEIVED GROUND FIRE WHILE FLYING AT 700 FEET NEAR VI THANH. THE AIRCRAFT WAS NOT HIT, AND THE PILOT TOOK EVASIVE ACTION AND LANDED SAFELY. TWO DAYS LATER, A CANADIAN WARRANT OFFICER DRIVING AN ICCS JEEP WAS FIRED UPON AT DUSK NEAR CAI LAY DISTRICT TOWN IN DINH TUONG. THE OFFICER WAS NOT HIT, BUT LATER EXAMINATION SHOWED THAT THE

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JEEP HAD BEEN STRUCK BY A SINGLE ROUND.

4. GVN ACTIVITY: (A) TERRITORIAL FORCE (TF) PERFORMANCE AND MORALE (CAN THO 0216 AND A-65) CONTINUES TO BE OF CONCERN TO THE MR IV COMMAND. DURING THE MONTHLY TAOR (TACTICAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY) MEETING MAY 11, MGEN NGHI REVIEWED REGIONAL AND POPULAR FORCE PROBLEMS WITH HIS DIVISION COMMANDERS AND PROVINCE CHIEFS. NGHI NOTED THAT RF/ PF KILL RATIOS HAVE DECLINED EACH MONTH SINCE TOA CEASEFIRE. IN SOME PROVINCES LIKE KIEN GIANG AND KIEN PHONG, TERRITORIAL FORCES ARE LOSING MORE MEN THAN THE VC/ NVA. IN OTHERS, LIKE CHUONG THIEN AND PHONG DINH, RF/ PF ARE LOSING MORE WEAPONS THAN THEY ARE CAPTURING. PARTICULARLY DISTURBING ARE THE HEAVY LOSSES IN THE MILITARILY LESS ACTIVE PROVINCES OF PHONG DINH AND VINH LONG TO VC/ NVA INDIRECT FIRE ATTACKS. DURING APRIL ALMOST 50 PER CENT OF MR IV' S BATTALIONS HAD NO CONTACT AT ALL.
(B) TO CORRECT THE SITUATION AND IMPROVE TF MORALE, NGHI ORDERED KILL RATIOS BE REVERSED. ANY SECTOR COMMANDER WHO FAILS TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST A ONE TO ONE RATIO IN JUNE WILL BE PUNISHED. THREE TO ONE IS THE EVENTUAL OBJECTIVE. NGHI FURTHER ORDERED HIS PROVINCE CHIEFS TO STRENGTHEN OUTPOSTS, OVERSEE THE PREPARATION
OF DETAILED OPERATIONS PLANS FOR RF BATTALIONS AND SHARPLY INCREASE THE FLOW OF COMMISSARY SUPPLIES TO RF/ PF UNITS AND OUTPOSTS. THE SECTOR COMMANDERS TOOK CAREFUL NOTES. HOPEFULLY THEY WILL DO MORE THAN IMPROVE THE STATISTICS THEY REPORT.

5. CIVILIAN DETAINEES: FOR THE SECOND TIME IN TWO WEEKS A GVN ATTEMPT TO PICK UP SOME 50 VC- HELD PRISONERS IN THE U MINH FOREST HAS BEEN ABORTED. THE PICK UP WAS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 12 BUT WAS CANCELLED THE MORNING OF MAY 11 WHEN THE ICCS PRISONER RELEASE TEAM FAILED TO GET SATISFACTORY SECURITY ASSURANCES FROM THE PRG. WHEN THE ICCS BALKED THE GVN/ JMC IN SAIGON WITHDREW FROM THE VENTURE. AN EARLIER ATTEMPT ON MAY 2 TO PICK UP THE DETAINEES CAME TO GRIEF FOR IDENTICAL REASONS (CAN THO 0276). NO DATE HAS
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BEEN SET FOR A THIRD TRY.
WISNER UNQUOTE
WHITEHOUSE

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NMAFVVZCZ

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